/93 cont./
551 adopted their ways. Among the Shih /"rock"/ and Lung /"dragon"/ there are the Ta /"big"/ Shih and Shao /"small"/ Shih, the Ta Lung and Shao Lung. Shao Shih is also written with the character shih meaning "time," and Shao Lung, also with the character lung meaning "eminent." Although they 582 have surnames, they do not have a closely knit organization [614] of family clans, and so formerly they did not object to marriage between people of the same surname. However, no marriage [177] was permitted between close relatives. In recent years they have come under Chinese influence, and know that people of [551] the same surnames must not marry. Shao Shih /"small rock"/ was changed to be written with the character shih meaning "time," and Shao Lung /"small dragon"/ was changed to be written with the character lung meaning "eminent," in order to separate them from Ta Shih /"big rock"/ and Ta Lung /"big dragon"/, so that they could intermarry. Today, Miao family 177 life has become more and more like that of the Chinese, and 594 marriage and funeral rites largely follow Chinese customs, 764 barely retaining remnants of some Miao customs.

(2) Marriage

● 836 /94/ Among the Miao the premarital sex life of the young men and women is rather free. When a virgin has intercourse with a man, her parents know about it but do not forbid it. On the contrary, they consider this evidence that the man finds their daughter desirable. Sometimes, the girl brings home her lover, and her parents will kill a chicken to entertain him. [345] There are even public houses set up specially for the use of young men and women to gather together. For instance, in Chapter II reference was made to the Pa Chai Miao, recorded in Yung-sui T'ing Chih, to the effect that an empty shed was built near the village, where unmarried men and women gathered [584] together to sing. If a couple fell in love, a cow was sent as a betrothal gift. Again, the unmarried men among the Ch'ing 517 Chiang He Miao were called "lohan"; in the spring they would [533]

/94 cont./

836 carry wine and food up the mountain, singing and dancing re-
517 ciprocally. Those who became fond of each other would drink
[533] from an ox horn. There is the custom among the Miao of
[535] dancing for the new year, dancing for the moon, and singing for autumn. On such occasions, young men and women form groups and sing in response to each other all night until daybreak. After singing they mix with each other, drinking and joking, even to the extent of having sexual relations. This is called fang yeh "going wild."

582 Although unmarried men and women are free to fall in love,
[584] marriage, however, requires parental consent as well as the approval of the maternal uncle of the girl. The He Miao of Ch'ing Chiang, Kweichow have a marriage custom where they betroth the daughter of a paternal aunt to be the daughter-in-law of a maternal uncle. Should the maternal uncle have no son, the girl's family has to pay a large sum of money to him. Without such a payment the girl all her life may not marry. The Miao, other than close paternal cousins not being suitable mates, they do not object to marriage between people of the same surname. However, maternal cousins may not marry.
582 This is a survival from a matrilineal society, because in a
611 matrilineal society maternal cousins have the same surname whereas cross cousins or male and female first cousins on the father's side have different surnames. That maternal cousins cannot marry is evidence of their advance from a matrilineal society to a patrilineal society. The importance of the maternal uncle's position in sacrificial ceremonies as well as in the society is additional evidence.

514 The former marriage customs of the Miao were slightly
583 different from their present ways. Yung-sui T'ing Chih says: "Miao marriage is just like a purchase. They do not follow the /Chinese/ custom of asking names (as a preliminary to fixing a betrothal) and sending presents to the bride's home to fix the betrothal. They only negotiate about the number of horses and cattle through a broker. The broker is a Miao marriage go-between. It definitely requires five or six horses or heads
000 of cattle to initiate a trade for one wife. When the agreement

/94 cont./ When the agreement
585 is reached an inauspicious /sic/ day is chosen to welcome the
[292] wife. The bride wears a moon-white gown and walks holding a parasol, half open, half shut, called the shame-hiding parasol. Her father and mother, brothers, and relatives escort her to
[583] the husband's house. The dowry consists of everything from cattle and sheep and goats to plows and harrows. They do not enter by the main door but through a hole bored through a wall. Men and women sit together. The bride is not allowed to look left or right, or else the husband would be displeased for fear that shermay be fond of some one else. The couple takes each a bowl of rice, a piece of fish, and a cup of wine dregs. Next they visit the paternal uncles' houses in the same village, at each eating and drinking the same items. On their return home they are husband and wife, but they do not spend the night to-
[582] gether." It also says: "The Miao do not object to marriage between people of the same surname, but relatives do not marry. On the wedding night the bride sleeps with her mother, who leaves only when the groom gives her some silver as a gift /95/, called the "mother's money" or "milk money." It is generally about two or three liang of silver. A wealthy family,
556 seeing a pretty girl, might order their son to drag the girl from
583 behind. This is called "carrying off a woman and marrying
584 her by force." The girl's family attracted by their wealth, do not engage the girl to anyone else, but get a go-between to discuss betrothal presents. When a virgin has an affair with
• 836 a man, her parents know about it but do not forbid it. On the contrary, they consider this evidence that the man finds her
684 desirable. But, if one's wife or concubine is seduced, then
[837] they raise knives, facing each other, and money is required as compensation. If a husband and wife do not get along,
586 the husband may divorce her and marry again, and the wife may do the same. As to improper sexual conduct, instances
837 were very rare even in former days, and today the Miao have become more aware of ethical and moral obligations." (What is recorded in the Miao Fang Pei Lan is to the same effect.)

/98 cont./

587 [589] [83] [765] A widow has freedom of sexual intercourse. There is no definite period of mourning for her deceased husband and she may remarry at any time, except that she must have the approval of the brothers of the deceased husband. If either the elder or the younger brother of the deceased wishes to marry the widowed sister-in-law, then she may not marry an outsider. Otherwise she returns to her family to marry again. At the time of the second marriage a sorcerer priest is also asked to perform the ritual. There is no go-between nor a formally set date. At the wedding the "shame-covering parasol" must be opened fully. On reaching her new husband's home she enters by the front entrance. /99/ A widow may marry again and again. Furthermore, she can have a husband marry into her household.

(3) Birth

842 [782] 843 844 Despite the hard life of the Miao, the desire for sons is very strong with both rich and poor. When a Miao man has no son at middle age he must pray to the gods and make a vow, for the early birth of a son. A pregnant Miao woman keeps on working. At the time of delivery, they use a bamboo sifter placed on the ground, lined with cotton wadding on which is placed a layer of ragged garments. The woman stands with her legs apart, the body slightly bending, her two hands gripping the side of a bed or a bench. If she happens to be working on a mountainside and does not have time to get back home, then she chooses a place under the shade of a tree where she can easily get a grip. If the newborn child does not cry, she digs [825] out a blood clot from its mouth, or sometimes she keeps a cat ready on the side, and hits it to make it meow so as to startle 845 the infant awake. In case of complicated childbirth, an experienced old woman in the village is asked to help extract the child with the hands. Should an infant die in the womb, it is taken out with a hook, or sometimes a sorcerer priest is

4:Mickey E-5 (1940-?) 1947 AE5 Miao AE5

are farmers. In the family in which I lived the oldest man, one nephew, and the son had gone through middle school in Kweiyang. The nephew's eldest son was then in the Lung-li Middle School. Both the old man and the nephew have been the teacher in the local school. The son had considerable business to do for the family.

On three occasions when the moon was full and the night clear — the fifteenth of the Chinese month — children ran and shouted until they were tired out. Once this was at the temple while the Huang and Su families were holding the annual family feast. Twice it was in the village. Like the Chinese, the Miao seemed loathe to go to bed as long as it was light enough out of doors to see, particularly on moonlit nights. One such night someone was practising the *lu sheng* until well into the night, the children were shouting and the young folks laughing and talking. On two other nights when it was very clear and the moon bright, though not full, the young men played the *lu sheng* (fig. 18, *a*, *b*) and the girls danced. Lively, fast tunes were played, and all seemed to be enjoying themselves hugely. This took place at the point where the men made a sacrifice and had a feast on San Yüeh San. They told me they would have danced out of doors on the occasion of an old lady's funeral had there been a moon, but it came at the dark of the moon.

Youth. Young people grew up much less hedged about with conventions than were the Chinese of the locality. They worked and played together, as in the cleaning of stables, fishing in the pond, harvesting, and the New Year holiday. At that time girls sat about two fires in the space bounded by the buffalo bullfighting meadow, a bamboo thicket, a cluster of grave mounds, and the highway along the southern edge of the wood. There they embroidered, played the flute, and sang, as they entertained young men from other Cowrie Shell Miao villages. A group of women with their children sat about the third fire, but did not interfere with the teasing, snatching of turbans and ornaments, and chasing which went on. During this period boys from other villages stayed all night in the homes of this village, and a group went to market together. If there was sexual promiscuity at this time, it was not practised openly.

883 It might have been of the sort that existed
836 in An-lung Hsien. There between the time
of her betrothal and her marriage, which were
arranged by the two families, a Miao girl
would, without letting her family know, very
often have relations with a young man of her
own choosing, and bear him a child. I was
told that often a husband would not acknowl-
edge the first child, even if it were a son, and
that when family property was divided this
child would receive no share. The mother,
however, usually managed to get money for
her love child, so that he might not be with-
out inheritance. From the similarity of the
songs sung in the two places, I suspected that
the same thing went on in a Cowrie Shell Miao
village. Here are translations of the two songs.
The one from An-lung was definitely an in-
vitation from a young man for sexual inter-
course. Some girls were more forward and
grasping than others. I noticed that Mo-mei
managed matters so that she and the girls she
favored got most of the attention.

883 THE AN-LUNG MIAO SONG
836 For a long time I have been coming here.
The cool water here produces cool melons.
539 If one opens the melon he may drink cool water.
If you will not be my sweetheart, I shall not come
again.

THE COWRIE SHELL MIAO SONG

On the top of the high mountain is planted a red
flower.
Younger sister (I) cannot hope that older brother
(you) will come.
Older brother (you) has ten years moved the
flower;
In ten places there has been communication, in nine
places complete.
The road is long, the *ma ts'ao* is red.

883 Now and then on clear, moonlit nights the
535 young men of the village brought out their
lu sheng and the girls danced. Otherwise one
533 heard the *lu sheng* only when they were prac-
tising the rhythm and tunes — usually of an
evening after work — at a bullfight, when the
young people were together in a village after
a bullfight or a wedding, and at a funeral.
Then the dancing, accompanied by drum and
lu sheng, went on from dusk till dawn for as
many as four successive nights.

534 The *lu sheng* was made of wood, and was [50a]
also called the *liu sheng* because it had six

174 the earth", fit only to be their helots and serfs. Shy and timid, and always surrounded by these more powerful neighbours, the Miao had lost the power to assert themselves, and content to be serfs, they tilled the land of their lairds whose chattels they had become. It was as though the thick mists, which settle on the tops of the mountain ranges in the out-of-the-way places where the Flowery Miao dwell, had fallen upon their hearts and minds so that they could scarcely see. They lived in the Slough of Despond.

273 579 Both men and women were much given to drinking, the spirits which they drank being distilled from grain. Festivals, marriages and sacrifices were all occasions for reckless drinking when they seemed to glory in their shame and frequently could be seen helplessly drunk. Some of their drinking bouts would go on for three days and nights when the sounds of drunken revelry could be heard all over the villages.

836 The relation between the sexes was very lax and practically every village or hamlet had its "Flowery House", where the boys and girls spent their nights together. Many a young mother did not know who was the father of her child, and it has been said that at one time no girl over the age of fourteen was still a virgin.

771 Their religion was a kind of Animism. The spirit world is as real to them as the living world, though there appears to be no trace of what we may call the greater gods. In a vague way they believed in the transmigration of souls, and they certainly

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

836 837 On the second or third days of the second moon, at *tuan yang* 端陽, and on the sixth day of the sixth moon, men and women and boys and girls go to market. There they make advances to each other and a boy or a man goes home with a girl or a woman. On the way or in her home they are likely to enjoy sexual intercourse. They may or may not be married people. If anybody in the home of the woman or girl objects, a quarrel ensues. Generally no trouble is made by the wife or husband of either of the actors. But sometimes a woman who has irregular sexual relations with men other than her husband objects to her husband's doing likewise and in rare cases she commits suicide. It is said that among the Ch'uan Miao there are no harlots, women who habitually sell themselves for money and depend on that for a living. Sexual relations are generally the result of love affairs.

837 593 At the *tso chai* 做齋 ceremony or the *ch'ao chien* 超薦 ceremony, or at the *hua t'an* ceremony, the host may bring out a bamboo stick and hang it up on his door and near it hang up an iron chain. Then he says, "You are my guests, old and young. If a wife or a husband causes trouble because of what his mate does I will not endure it." He implies that he will beat that person and if the person does not run away or desist he will chain that person up. Then those present quietly entice each other, without speaking a word. If a man entices a woman and she consents, they enjoy each other and nothing happens. If she refuses, he desists. The same principal holds if the woman makes the advances. The act of sexual intercourse may take place in the woods, in the house where the guests are being entertained, or in another house. Nothing is done by either a husband or a wife afterwards. It is thought by some that this custom has grown out of unhappy early marriages.

Women purposely dress as well as possible so as to look pretty and attractive to the opposite sex. They do not use face powder, but most of them do not need to for Nature has given them good complexions. Women who are popular with men are pretty or ready of speech or well dressed or good singers or have bright minds or have money. These are the qualities that attract the men. Men who are popular with the women are handsome, or mentally bright or good singers or good at playing the *liu shêng* and dancing, or have money. Wealth alone is not sufficient, although it makes a great difference, and generally but not always ability to work is esteemed. 533 It is said that the most potent music of all in making love is that made by blowing on tree leaves which has the advantage that audible words can be spoken by the musician.

[18 cont.]

301 two silver bracelets and two or three finger rings. But when they put on their best embroidered clothes, then they would wear a kind of silver headgear with different kinds of silver pins in the chignon, and at least two or three solid silver necklaces, sometimes as many as a dozen; the number of bracelets and finger rings they wear is also doubled. They would have still more silver jewelry on the dress or attached to the waist. The [556] quantity of silver worn is an index to the wealth of the family, and so during festivals the women become exhibits in every family.

3. Marriage

584 Marriage among the Miao is mostly the result of love, but the mediation of the match-maker and the engagement ceremony are necessary before fixing the date of marriage. Young men and women [19] at the "liu sheng [reed-wind instrument] dance" in the first lunar month may openly fall in love with each other without the intervention of parents or brothers of the family. In ordinary times, especially during the holidays, they may also court each other at will. So on the mountain slope or in the field we often observe scenes of "yao-ma-lang" (i.e., love-making), when they sing songs to each other in questions [593] and answers. One party would ask a question in a song, and if the other party is willing she sings back the answer. These songs are extemporized, full of freedom and naturalness. Such serenades last till sunset when they begin to return home. After a suitable period of time, if their feelings persist then the parents would find a go-between to arrange the engagement.

836 This system of love and marriage seem very free, yet there is no promiscuity. Their conduct is regulated by unwritten laws and they all have a high sense of decency. For instance, yao-ma-lang is carried on out of sight of old people, and yet it has to be within sight of passers-by. Furthermore, men and women must remain at least five feet apart, and necking and embracing are taboo. (The Long-skirt Miao not far away from them permit

[19 cont.]
836 embracing.) So, pre-marital relations between men and women are rare if not altogether absent. The following are some of the love songs they sing to each other in free translation:

539

I

You seem not to care for me,
But with you I'm in love.
It is as keen as a dagger,
For you are too beautiful.

When I scale the mountain peak,
Day and night my thoughts wander,
Your image they continue to seek.
What magic have you yonder?

II

Ye maids who marriage have not known,
How many are there in your village?
One of you I wish to call my own
To share my route and tillage.
In the village we shall sit, you and I,
For shortly we shall be two genii.

III

In that village there are pretty flowers,
In that village there are pretty maids;
Their faces are like snow flakes on the bowers,
Their brows, a crescent moon that never fades.
Please, send me one to adore,
And I shall never ask for more.

69: Lewis T-5 (1950) 1951 AM 1 Indochina
Miao AE5
Shan-Thai AL3

INTO THE MEO COUNTRY

Besides the Meos' predilection for mountain tops they have other claims to distinction. They are utterly independent and quite fearless. Their passion for freedom compels them to live in the smallest of villages and, apart from such rare events as the invasion of 1860, they will not tolerate chiefs or leaders. If forcibly brought to lower altitudes they are soon taken ill and die. They are normally pacific, but if compelled to fight are apt to eat the livers of slain enemies. M 181

The Meos are the only people in Indo-China who are not in the slightest concerned with evil spirits, although they admit their existence. Their complete indifference to all the ghouls and devils that plague the races surrounding them has invested them with enormous prestige, which they are careful to cultivate. They like to encourage the belief, prevalent among the Thais, that they are were-wolves and can turn into tigers at wish. They have no funerary cults but celebrate a funeral – or any other event providing the slightest excuse – with orgies of drinking. Husbands and wives keep their own property. Children are given the greatest degree of freedom; and sexual promiscuity before marriage – even with strangers – is general. 'Sacred groves' exist – there is a celebrated one at Dong-Van in Tonkin – to which Meo girls resort, and offer themselves freely to all comers. It is said that large-scale maps, upon which the locations of such groves have been scrupulously plotted, are the prized possessions of most French garrisons in Tonkin. Besides breeding fine, white dogs, they are experts at taming monkeys and birds, particularly a kind of minah which they teach a wide repertoire of imitative sounds. The Meos will only part with their animals for an enormous price – payable in solid silver which they immediately convert into massive jewellery. M 771 M 836 M 231 435

But the first village beyond Muong Kassy, perched on a bare hill-top and reached laboriously up a long winding path, proved not to belong to Meos but the 'black' Thais – so called from the distinctive dress of their women. It was like climbing up to an eagle's eyrie and finding crows in possession. A rare species of crow though. Check- ST 361

[151 cont.]

157 the strang r who comes to visit him and who is completely safe
609 under his roof.

The "Méo" women are gay, mirthful, only slightly shy, especially when their confidence has been gained. (One may see in photo 128, Plate 43, a European woman in the midst of a group of "Méotes," who are showing a sometimes indiscreet curiosity regarding all that has to do with the details of costume and of coiffure of strangers from the Occident.)

562 The condition of the "Méo" women is rather hard. They share in the most difficult labor.

836 The young women are not distinguished by an excess of virtue, but this fact is considered of little importance by the "Méo."

526 The young boys and the young men greatly honor exercises of skill and strength and often compete with one another in carrying heavy burdens or in racing over the mountains.

[152] The various dialects used by the "Méo" are monosyllabic.
193 As among the "Man-ta-pan" the qualifying word is placed before the noun, the subject before the verb, the direct object after the indirect.

197 It is likely that in their country of origin each "Méo" tribe used a special dialect. Among the tribes settled in Tonkin, who are very much mixed together, the dialects, which are not fixed by any writing, seem to blend together by regions and to be used in each of these regions by all the "Méo" tribes who dwell there.

[198] Almost all the "Méo" use the "kouan-hoa" as the language of
212 commerce. Literate persons are very rare. Those who know a few
[871] characters pronounce them in the Chinese fashion. The "Méo" are beginning to send their children to the schools that are being con-
[648] ducted in our frontier posts located at the high altitudes. For their dealings with the authorities and for writing their rare letters, they have recourse to the help of a literate Chinese.

538 The "Méo" have no written literature, but they know narra-
[533] tives, prayers, and some songs, which they sing in a monotonous, sad tone. They show little imagination, much simplicity and sometimes even triviality, for they particularly extol the material joys of life, of the table, and of love, the sole pleasures of a race whose

855 hard toil of the fields. Too thinly clad and fed almost exclusively
857 on maize, they remain exposed to the inclemencies of the seasons, all day long, and spend the night in a house open to every wind. This produces selection proceeding from the disappearance of the weak, but those who resist such a regimen are then able to withstand any sort of hardship.

/Between pages 136 and 137 of the text, the two following photographs appear: "White Meo women"; "Embroidered Meo women."--translator/

591 /137/ When young men of the family marry, if there are sufficient fields to cultivate around the family house, they bring their wife there and live under the authority of the father of the family. If this is not the case, they go and establish themselves in the midst of an area needing to be cleared, and undertake the task courageously.

548 The chastity of Meo women does not seem to be as unassail-
836 able as that of Tho women, and some of them shamelessly engage in prostitution, and do not have to leave their place in the family on this account. When on an inspection tour in Dongvan, I remember that I expressed my astonishment at hearing hands clap each time I passed through certain woods, which surrounded a pagoda near the post. But my astonishment gave place to stupefaction when I learned that the sacred wood was permanently haunted by young Meo girls who accorded their favors to all who came beneath its discreet shade.

[621 The number of houses which make up a hamlet rarely exceeds
361] three or four. Even then the inhabitants usually are of the same stock,
631 and the head of the hamlet is naturally enough the progenitor of the
615 family group. The various hamlets of a small valley or of a little rocky cirque are grouped under the authority of a ma phai, who is properly speaking the chief of the village. Several villages are grouped under the authority of a ping tau, who fills the role of a giap truong or district chief in an Annamese commune, and who is himself assisted in his duties by a tsa thao. Finally, the different districts are joined together to form a tribe under the orders of a tung cha who fills the role of the mayor of a Tho commune, with a still greater
631 authority. This is the type of organization which exists in Dong Quan
609 and surrounding country, when the tribe is of a certain extent. If
563 it is less important, it is headed only by a ping tau or a simple ma phai, who is under the authority of the mayor of the Tho commune

/72 cont./

881 The menstruating Meau girl is ashamed and tries to find out from her mother whether she is ill; she is also reticent about talking with other adults. The mother explains the facts of life to the girl, unless this has already been done by older playmates, as is usually the case. Boys naturally turn to their fathers with questions about sex.

[157] Girls as well as boys at the time of puberty become introspective, often seem absent-minded, and gradually withdraw more and more from the children's group, for which they have less and less time since they are put to work to an increasing extent. At the beginning of this period the adolescents avoid [572] the other sex; friendships between those of the same sex arise instead. The adolescents often develop an extravagant attachment to older persons of the same sex.

[774] This behavior, especially the apparent absent-mindedness, disturbs the parents. Soon it is said that the soul has left the body [756] and that evil spirits prevent it from returning. One sends for the [755] shaman, who begins his conjurations. /Ill. 18-21 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /73/ which make an extremely strong impression upon the adolescents.

887 Very soon, however, their attitude changes and strikes 836 out in the opposite direction. The pubescent Meau then seeks contacts with the other sex; they tend to stay away from members of their own sex, but especially from the younger children, and attach themselves to adults. It is not long before the girl, prompted by the older boys, begins an open flirtation, which usually leads to sexual surrender. The pubescent boys also seek sexual intercourse and approach the older, still unmarried girls, but never married women (see the section, "Courtship and Betrothal," in this chapter). They follow the older boys on their pursuit of girls and try to watch them and it is not long before they, too, are experienced in all phases of love-making (see the section, "Sexual Development," in this chapter).

883 The pubescent Meau begin to pay attention to cleanli- [515] ness and wash themselves several times a month. They think a great deal about their future. They picture their home,

[Text continues on P. 112]

/86 cont./

A M 145 125 532 [153] The self-criticism that the children exhibit even at an early age was surprising. Some Akha children about ten years old repeatedly refused to draw because "their lines did not look like the things they wanted to draw." In contrast, the really primitive people, the Phi Tong Luang (1), behaved quite

1. Bernatzik, IV, pp. 174 ff.

differently. Here even the adults scribbled for hours and then explained to me circumstantially what the lines, which in no instance went beyond the scribbling stage, were supposed to mean.

In conclusion it should be said that neither among the Meau nor the Akha did the talent for drawing disappear at a certain age, as we often find among European children (see also the chapter, "Art," the section on "Painting, Sculpture, Ornamentation," and the chapter, "Talent, Knowledge, Character, Morality, and Manners").

/87/ d) Sexual Development

A M 836 Among the Meau as well as among the Akha, unmarried young people enjoy extensive sexual freedom, which is documented by other authors for the Meau of other regions as well (1).

1. Eberhard II, pp. 253, 255, 256, 258, 261; also Chin. Repos., 14, p. 110.

M 864 [513] The children of the Meau, separated according to sex, sleep in their own sleeping quarters or at least in their own beds; only the small children sleep with their mothers. They therefore have no opportunity to gather experience by observing the adults. If they occasionally ask questions of a sexual nature, the adults answer truthfully, provided that the M [825] children are somewhat bigger. Small children, however, are

/87 cont./

M 864 [825] told that the gibbons and monkeys, which animate the primeval forest in the neighborhood of the villages, put the babies in the laps of the women. Thus, among the Meau, the apes occupy the position of our stork. The explanation of the facts of life is given to the children of the Meau at the time of puberty at the latest.

A M 838 839 Onanism, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions are not found among either the Akha or the Meau. In most instances I did not even succeed in explaining these concepts to my informants, but when I did, they indignantly denied their occurrence, pointing out that the ancestors and spirits would prevent such perversions.

A M 836 626 [835] [831] Within the incest prohibitions, which apply not only to marriage, but also to free love (see the section, "Marriage Obstacles and Regulations," in this chapter) and are strictly observed, since a violation, according to the belief of the natives, would be immediately punished by the ancestors and spirits, the choice of a partner is completely free for the young men, whereas public opinion, but not the young men themselves, demands chastity of the girl. In practice, however, the demands of public opinion only result in secrecy, by boys as well as girls, about everything that is connected with sexual life.

A M 836 [832] [833] In the case of younger boys, the older girls take the initiative by flirtation, at which they are masterfully adept. It often happens that a girl who teaches a young boy /88/ the arts of love-making later on becomes his chief wife, since she most likely will become pregnant. Older boys, on the other hand, often assume the training of the young girls. We frequently had an opportunity to observe an open flirtation. My M 832 883 123 wife wrote about one such observation in her journal: "May, the chief's daughter, is probably about sixteen years old and is a typical 'teen-ager' in behavior. She giggles at the least thing or bursts into loud peals of laughter over a remark shouted at her by one of the boys. It is loudest, however, when several girls are assembled. They chatter and laugh so loudly and unrestrainedly, even when we are working nearby, that we are

/88 cont./

M 832 883 123 seriously disturbed. It is gayest when Bun Ma, our Lao interpreter, is visited in his camp by three or four girls together. Then there is no end of ringing laughter; it wakes us up in the morning and prevents us from falling asleep at night. They tease him about one of the girls, urge him to visit her because, they say, she is waiting for him, ask how the Lao make love, and so forth. Bun Ma, a slender, gracefully built Lao, feels himself very much the center of attention and declares that if they were not so dirty he would long since have made friends with a Meau girl. As a matter of fact, the dirtiness of the girls considerably disturbs the Lao, very much accustomed to cleanliness, though he is readily captivated by the pretty faces and the ingratiating nature of the girls. In the evening Bun Ma sits in the house of the chief, and the girls teach him the love songs of the Meau in their language, and even the old chief joins in and, turning toward Bun Ma with a smirk, sings in the same register as the girls and amid general laughter: 'Where do you stay so long, I am waiting for you!'"

M [515] M [533]

A M 836 [548] [431] That purely materialistic considerations play only a minor role in the choice of a partner is shown by the fact that prostitution is unknown among both peoples and a girl never yields to a man who is not congenial to her. To be sure, it is customary for every young man to give his beloved a silver necklace, if he can afford it, while the girl in return gives him a beautiful batik cloth which she has made herself (see the chapter, "Clothing and Ornaments"); these gifts are /Ills. 22-25 appear here on unnumbered pages/ /89/ exchanged as a matter-of-course and incidentally after the pleasures of love have been enjoyed, and no girl is going to deny herself to a young man who is unable to give her an ornament, if she likes him otherwise. A girl is never influenced in the choice of her partner by the prospect of receiving an ornament afterward.

In contrast to my observations, Abadie (1) writes

1 114 548 836

1. Page 167.

concerning the Meau: "Even cases of prostitution are reported, without its casting the slightest dishonor upon those concerned..."

/89 cont./
A more detailed description, however, shows that this is without doubt a case of degeneracy about such as the proximity of any major station may bring about. The author speaks of a "sacred grove" in the neighborhood of Dongvan and continues: "If a European goes for a walk in this grove, one immediately sees several Meau girls descend from the neighboring hills where they work and offer the stroller their smiles and .... the rest..."
The unmarried, mature boys and girls of the Meau meet at suitable places along the edge of the fields or preferably at night in the field huts, but never in a dwelling. Dhuraratsadorn (2)

2. Page 168.

even maintains in his work that lovers are forbidden to meet in any dwelling for a tryst, because this would offend the house spirits. If anyone were to violate this command, he would be fined by the village elders, and the fine would be handed over to the owner of the house. Thus if two young people wanted to meet, they would have to agree on a place somewhere in the jungle.
The Chinese sources speak of special "love huts" of the young people, which girls, beginning at the age of ten, are allowed to visit (3).

3. Eberhard, II, p. 154.

Singing and the jew's-harp (see the chapter, "Art," the section on "Music and Musical Instruments")play an important role at these meetings. The lovers hold hands and take turns singing to each other or playing the jew's-harp for hours. Gradually the music-makers proceed to the sexual overtures, which are sometimes prolonged for hours. The partners stroke chest, body, and back, touch and stroke the organs, intertwine their legs, nuzzle each other, bite /90/ each other hard, and the like. The European kiss, on the other hand, is unknown, as among most primitive peoples, as is touching the mouth of the partner with one's own mouth, as well as erotic

/90 cont./

833 scratching, biting the eyelashes, nose-rubbing, in brief, the elements that play such a significant role among some inhabitants of the South Seas.

In contrast to the complicated overtures, the sexual act itself is simple and almost primitive. This is all the more strange in view of the fact that, unlike other peoples, there are no religious prohibitions to compel limitations in this respect, and otherwise the Meau are very imaginative. Nevertheless, they definitely reject all variations, in which, as is known, their Chinese neighbors are so unrivaled. The woman always lies on her back with her legs extended or slightly bent; the man lies on top of her, body against body, and their cheeks touch. Other positions are in part unknown and in part rejected. The Meau say of the Yau, who prefer the reverse position of [186] the woman: "They copulate like dogs, this is not good for human beings." -- After the ejaculation both partners sleep a while, and then the girl gets up softly and prepares a meal for her friend from provisions that she has brought along; they eat, and the love play begins anew.

836 The settlement of love intrigues is interesting and characteristic of the attitude of the Meau. If it becomes known that a girl has several lovers, the latter ask her jointly whose love she enjoyed first. The others then withdraw without protest, and a young man would never think of competing with another for his girl.

577 836 As long as sexual intercourse does not result in pregnancy no one thinks of marriage. An attempt is made, only for the sake of public opinion, to keep all love affairs secret. In such matters no one will censure a lie, which is otherwise so strictly condemned by the Meau. Now, the villages of the Meau in northern Thailand are small, moreover, the members of the village community are subject to the marriage prohibition, since most of them are related by blood or belong to the sib. Hence, the young men must often walk for hours or days to reach their beloved. If a young man then returns home dead-tired and his father, as is unlikely, should ask him where

/90 cont./

577 836 he has been, the boy will answer that he /91/ was delayed on the hunt. The girl will say that she spent the time looking for some object, or that she stayed overnight with a girl friend, or give some other such excuse. When I quite innocently asked a young man who was returning from his three-day excursion where he had been, he replied in all seriousness: "Wild pigs have devastated our rice field, and I lay in wait for them. They were too clever, however, and I could not catch them." At the same time, his father, who had overheard our conversation, winked at me and later whispered into my ear: "He returned dead-tired from a visit to his girl."

581 For the Meau, the decisive factor in the selection of a female partner is not the social position, but the physical characteristics of the girl. When I asked a Meau who would [732] [143] marry a stupid girl -- it was a case of cretinism, which occurs rather frequently -- he answered me briefly and characteristically: "A stupid man," even though in this case the girl belonged to a powerful and rich sib. The fact that girls at the [585] [614] moment of marriage completely give up their connection with their sib and enter the sib of the husband may play an important role in this. Among the girls of the Meau, on the other hand, even though they are not concerned specifically about the social position of the man, there are other significant factors that are not connected with sexuality. This is indicated in the reply of girls whom I questioned about the type of man they would like to have. In one form or another the answer was always: "Clever and strong, in order to master life." Not a single one put any value on a handsome or "dashing" man. The closeness to nature of the Meau permits the girls to see clearly what proficiency in the primeval forest life means. To be sure, I never met a single incompetent man among the Meau. The stern laws of nature would soon cause him to disappear from this society.

595 833 513 Married people customarily have sexual union at night in their bedroom. In answer to my question as to what the other wives do if the husband, who shares his bed with all of his wives, bestows his attention on one, my informant said: "The others

/91 cont./

595 833 513 sleep." Another gave the opinion: "He enjoys himself with several at the same time"; a third said: "The others look on." Even though, as I /92/ could observe, the natives sleep so soundly as a rule that one can pull the sleeping mats from under the body or, as I literally experienced, can fire a gun without awakening them, still I cannot believe that young wives in particular sleep as soundly as my informants maintained. However, that may be, in any case it is certain that a woman never has intercourse with several men at the same time; the reverse is more likely.

183 836 [562] As has been mentioned, among the Meau the public demands chastity of young girls in order that the young men, whose marriage is desired as early as possible, will soon decide to take this step. This demand is untenable, however, for, on the one hand, the young men, as was discussed in detail, enjoy [584] complete freedom, and, on the other hand, it is the boy who chooses a girl to marry. Since the girls, however, are censured only if caught in the act, they generally have no objection to premarital sexual intercourse, which they secretly submit to against the wish and will of their parents, although maintaining secrecy is very difficult if only for external reasons, in view of the smallness of the Meau villages. In fact, my informants laconically answered my question as to what they would do if they discovered that their daughters were having a love affair: "We could do nothing if there were no consequences." As far [582] as I was able to observe, the girls take advantage of this situation, depending upon when they marry, which is usually at the age of twenty or twenty-one. Lajonquière (1) and Abadie (2),

1. II, p. 315.

2. Page 151.

for instance, write that "the virtue of the girls is not beyond reproach," and that in practice the Meau attach little importance to this fact.

/92 cont./

836 [562] With regard to the boys, however, the parents are positively proud of the successes of their sons in this respect. The chief, Tsin Tsai, for instance, told me that his second youngest son was especially clever with the girls. He had surely inherited this from him, because in his youth he had been called a "tiger among the girls"!

848 [842] It is strange that illegitimate children are relatively rare, although I was repeatedly told that no contraceptive devices are used. If a girl gives birth to an illegitimate child, however, the families concerned immediately change their attitude, /93/ and the parents of the lovers forcefully insist on the marriage of the young people. The girl is ready for this under all circumstances, but it sometimes happens that a young man wants to evade his obligation. In this case both families [626] put such pressure upon him that he practically always gives in. If not, he is obliged to pay any indemnity that the girl's [684] parents demand. If he is not in a position to do this, he has to marry for otherwise he would be severely punished by the chief of the village.

627 848 If a young man should deny paternity, the testimony of the girl, or the young mother, is valid in doubtful cases. She summons her parents and those of the young man and leads them to the place where she had her meetings with the young man. She describes details which almost always force the young man to withdraw his denials. Moreover, in the generally small communities, it is probably always known "with whom a girl is going," as my informants said. On the other hand, if the [851] seducer pays the price asked by the girl's parents, the matter is regarded as settled, and the illegitimate child remains with the family of the mother and belongs to this family.

114 847 848 In contrast to my observations, separate authors report that the Meau try to get rid of illegitimate children through abortion or at the latest after the birth. Lajonquière (1),

1. II, p. 317.

for instance, writes: "If a child is conceived out of wedlock,

/97 cont./

A 582 Among the Akha, the marriage age for both sexes is between the sixteenth and twentieth year.

e) Courtship and Betrothal

M 583 183 For a Meau boy there are several ways to marry a girl. A common way taken is probably the one whereby a boy loves a girl, she bears a child, and later the parents of both give their consent. This way does not conform to the demands of "public opinion" and is therefore not customary among respectable families. A second way is to go out looking for a wife. M 584 The young man visits the various villages and selects a girl. Then he goes to his father or to the head of his large /extended/ M [787] family and asks for his advice. The ancestors are queried about it by way of an ordeal (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section on "Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens"). If the outcome of the ordeal is unfavorable, the young man drops the idea, but if the result is auspicious, he visits the girl's village again and asks her whether she consents to the proposed M marriage. If the girl agrees, she leaves her parents' home in [836] great secrecy and sleeps with the young man in the house of his parents. The next day, the young man's parents visit the parents of the bride in order to inform them of the fact, and M they send them a pig. The latter for their part also now slaughter [574] one and invite the relatives of the bridal couple to a feast. The two animals are eaten, rice liquor is copiously served, and the day for the wedding is set.

It often happens, however, that the girl refuses to leave her parents' house without their consent, that is to say, secretly. In this case, the young man /98/ asks his parents to visit the parents of the bride and ask for the girl. If the bride's parents give their consent, then everything is in order and the wedding day can be set. If the bride's parents do not give their permission, however, it is up to the girl to make the decision. M She can still decide to spend a night secretly with the boy in [836] his parents' home or simply to have intercourse with him until

/98 cont./

584 she becomes pregnant. In both cases, the parents of the girl
[83C] will immediately withdraw their opposition.
583 It also happens in practice that the young people disregard all formalities and begin with cohabitation without consulting their parents. In this case, too, the parents of the girl can do nothing but belatedly approve of the accomplished fact.

584 When one considers all the various ways, it is apparent
593 that the girl's parents cannot assert their will against that of the daughter. The father of the young man, on the other hand, into whose sib and, in most cases, household community the girl is to be received, can exert extensive influence upon the decision of his son. If the father or head of the family does not like the girl, he can ultimately give the refusal of the ancestors as a pretext, and no son will dare to undertake anything against their will.

583 In contrast to my observations, Lajonquière reports of the
584 Meau in Indochina, as does Abadie (1) in almost the same words:

1. Page 166.

"It happens that marriages are concluded against the will of the parents. In this case the young people flee and, if they are found, pay an indemnity to the father of the girl. A small
[574] feast is celebrated, and everything is settled."
584 Marabail (2) makes the following statements on this

2. Page 459.

subject: "If a Meau wants to marry, he tells his father, without asking him for permission, for he is completely free. The father then sends two friends to the house of the girl's father. When they arrive, they plant two incense sticks in the ground in front of the door and light them. The master of the house then comes out and asks what they want. He listens to them,
[574] invites them to his room, and gives them something to drink. This is the sign that he has accepted the offer. As soon as the

/140 cont./

539 The lover also often assures the girl of his faithfulness with a song: "If someone offers me two oranges, I shall eat 832 only one!"

"If two cups of clear water are offered to me, I shall drink only one!" (This indicates that he will not accept a "cold drink" from another girl.)

[836] /141/ Keepsakes are also cherished by the lovers, as is shown by the following definitely lyrical songs:

"If you give me a kerchief, I shall take care of it as I would of you. Whenever I see it, I shall think of you." -- The girl, to whom the boy has given a neck-ring, replies: "When I look at your neck-ring, your embraces will be present to me and I shall think of you."

The following song has particularly fervent words:

"I shall press your kerchief to my breast. If I remain alive, I shall return, and if I should die, my soul will hover around you as a good spirit."

Marabail (1), too, published love songs of the Meau:

1. Pages 296 and 298.

"The young man: 'Man is born only once. Just as the bee and the butterfly seek out the distant flower, so are human beings forced to cover long distances to find those with whom they are to unite. We two are from different villages, yet we want to marry. It is heaven that wishes this, heaven that is just and never errs.' The girl replies: 'Like the reed and the plum tree we are separated by endless distances. One should not jest so. Since you give me the example of the bees, however, we need only imitate them. Expect me then in the evening at nightfall, and I shall not fail to come.'"

539 Savina (2), too, is one of the authors who mention and

2. II, p. 197.

[533] record such alternate songs: "Most of the songs consist of questions and answers." He then gives the song of a mother who mourns for her deceased children: "The little children to

AKha A04
Miao AE5

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M 243 342

Fig. 88 (below). Rice-field hut of the Meau, sketch.

Key to symbols:

J = roof truss of bamboo, leaves of the fan palm as covering

K = roof rider of wood

L = walls of beaten tree-bark or split bamboo, fastened together by means of crossbeams.

/text continued/

M [353] the necessary comforts. Since they are often occupied for several weeks, the necessary household furnishings are likewise not lacking in them. Besides the agricultural implements, one sees crossbows, guns, quivers with arrows, powder horns, traps, and the like stored along the walls. Outside the hut one also often finds small windscreens made of palm leaves or rice straw (Ill. 104), which serve as additional sleeping places, as well as open granaries for the rice straw, large mats on which the grain is threshed, and a rice pounder. Chicken baskets lie stacked up, for at harvest time the fowl are brought from the village to pick up the scattered kernels, for the Meau take great pains to see to it that no kernel goes to waste.

M [513] M [231]

M 883 [243] Since the field work is primarily a duty for the growing youth, and they, removed from the authority of the village community, feel freer and more undisturbed, a gayer life always prevails up in the rice-field huts, and the work is amply interrupted by laughter and jesting. Even beyond the periods of field work, when the huts stand unused, they are happily sought out by young people as love nests. Up here they are disturbed by no one, and the quiet nights on the lonely mountain tops undoubtedly do not lack strong romanticism, as is shown by love songs which have the little rice-field huts as their scene of action.

M [836] [533]

A 361 166 [241] [623] The Akha, too, are seminomads who move their residence when the cultivable soil around the old village is exhausted. What has been said about the migrations of the Meau at the beginning of this chapter also applies to them. The decision to move the village, however, is made among the Akha by the